



WILLIAM HEWKO

*"The world is little interested in the storms you encounter,
but did you bring the ship in."*

-Geneva basketball

coach

"A leader is a dealer in hope." Napoleon Bonaparte.

During his storied lifetime, William (Bill) Hewko stepped into many roles: son, husband, father, athlete, soldier, teacher, administrator, coach. In all of these roles he was a consummate leader; in all of these roles he rallied, supported, coaxed, and championed others by offering them and sustaining in them a spirit of hope. He led teaching staffs to operate enthusiastically in spite of crowded classrooms and exhaustive work loads—hope. He encouraged would-be dropouts to stay in school—hope. He counseled at-risk students and guided their transformations and recoveries—

hope. Whether helping a child to master a foul shot or guiding a teacher to handle a rebellious class, Bill Hewko maintained a positive and fatherly attitude, fueled by his belief that even in challenging times and circumstances, one always can find hope.

Born into humble beginnings and raised by a strong and determined mother, Bill Hewko manifested leadership at an early age. He graduated from Freedom Area High School in 1956, leaving behind a legacy as a student and a basketball champion. He went on to earn his college degree at Geneva College, where he majored in social studies and drivers' education. He emerged from college armed with a diploma, an eye on the future, and plenty of hope.

"The leader has his eye on the horizon." Warren Bennis

Upon graduating from Geneva, Bill Hewko took on a number of jobs: coach, railroad brakeman, assemblyman; night drivers' education teacher, licensed real estate agent. From 1961 to 1975, at the time of his honorable discharge, he proudly served in the United States Army. But his eye always was on the horizon; for Bill that horizon was education.

In 1962 Bill Hewko returned to his alma mater, the Freedom Area School District, as a social studies and drivers' education teacher. During his tenure in the classroom, Hewko kept his eye on the educational horizon, enrolling in Westminster College and earning his master in education degree with a concentration in guidance and administration.

He soon left the classroom to become first a junior high and then a senior high guidance counselor, leading countless students to pursue their own horizons. Ten years into his career at Freedom, he became the junior high principal. Being at the helm of a building was a natural fit; he became a highly effective leader easily respected by students and staff.

After four years in the junior high, Hewko again returned to the senior high school, this time as principal, a position he would hold for the next seventeen years. The initiatives he promoted and the programs he developed were vast and diverse: establishing a teacher training program in conjunction with Community College of Beaver County; coordinating the Drug Free School monies for the district; initiating the Alternative Education Program; recognizing student achievement through initiatives such as Student of the Month, Governor's School programs, All-Sports Banquets,

and Principal's Receptions. He received numerous awards for his work in drug and alcohol awareness projects. He coordinated curriculum development, long range plans, financial aid seminars, and teacher training programs.

With his eye ever on the horizon, Hewko left Freedom in 1993 to become principal at Shaler Area High School. He facilitated Middle States Evaluation during his brief time at Shaler and received an "Excellent" rating for his work. During this time he also served as Middle States Evaluator at Mt. Pleasant High School.

"A leader is someone who helps improve the lives of other people." Sam Houston

Retirement from the public school sector means a time of leisure for many educators. This was far from the case for Bill Hewko. Ever mindful of the needs of struggling students, in 1996 he became the principal of Community College of Beaver County Class Academy. In his work there he created learning alternatives to facilitate student success, provided one-on-one counseling to at-risk students, and created small class sizes to enable greater opportunities for student success.

In 2000, Hewko left Class Academy to take charge of Longmore Academy at Mars Home for Youth. As principal there, he continued to improve the lives of at-risk students by designing curriculum, seeking and employing a caring staff, and coordinating efforts with surrounding districts. At a time when other retirees were enjoying life free from the stresses of the classroom, Hewko was working tirelessly to provide chances for students who had run out of chances, to foster feelings of worth in adolescents who felt they had no worth. His service to those individuals whom others had forsaken was immeasurable. He not only helped them to improve their lives; in many cases he gave them a reason to keep living.

In 2008, Bill Hewko finally gave up the cloak of principal he had worn so easily since the early seventies. Years of leadership in five diverse buildings ultimately led him to the rest and relaxation he had earned. It led him to the opportunity to finally and fully enjoy life with his family: his wife of thirty-two years, Sandra Cohen Hewko; his three children, John Hewko, Lynn Hewko Caffro, and Alexis Hewko, whose light was extinguished far too soon; and his two grandchildren, William and Megan Hewko. It led him to a time of reflection on a life so fully lived in the service of others. And it left diminished a slice of Beaver, Butler, and Allegheny Counties who knew Bill Hewko as an unparalleled leader – a man of hope, a visionary with a constant eye on the horizon, and, most significantly, a genuine and unselfish helper of others.